

THE CITY OF ROCKVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION

ROCKVILLE'S PIKE PLAN

Meeting 05-11

T R A N S C R I P T

O F

P R O C E E D I N G S

ROCKVILLE CITY HALL

Rockville, Maryland

March 20, 2013

BEFORE:

JERRY CALLISTEIN, Chairman

DAVID HILL, Commissioner

DON HADLEY, Commissioner

JOHN TYNER, Commissioner

DION TRAHAN, Commissioner

JACK LEIDERMAN, Commissioner

KATE OSTELL, Commissioner

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(This transcript includes the requested portions of the meeting only.)

CHAIRMAN: Sir, please speak directly into the mic and state your name and address for the record.

MR. DYER: Good evening. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Commissioners, I'm Robert Dyer, I actually live in Bethesda, not in Rockville.

CHAIRMAN: That's okay.

MR. DYER: I'm also a loyal patron of Rockville businesses for 40 year. You have a great city here, and I think the changing the formula is really the planning equivalent of new Coke, we all know how that went. I prefer Rockville classic.

Roger Lewis told you Rockville needs the change, Roger Lewis lives in the Palisades, the suburban part of D.C. that hasn't changed in 30 years. Why do smart growth advocates refuse to take the medicine they prescribe for the rest of us.

The transportation part of the plan remains a collection of hopes and dreams rather than solid data. If our military planned like this we'd all be speaking Russian here tonight. I'm shocked there's still no mention of the Rockville Freeway, or Rockville facility in here. We cannot absorb the traffic of this plan without the Rockville Freeway

1 between 355 and the ICC.

2 I'm also concerned about Twinbrook with the growth
3 plan for the Pike and through Viers Mill. Twinbrook is
4 really the nut in that nutcracker. I would ask you to strike
5 the sentence on page 4-26 under incentives to build crossing
6 over CSX, quote, while the current residential development
7 along Lewis Avenue makes this difficult, future opportunities
8 may allow such a crossing. If I'm a homeowner on Lewis
9 Avenue I'd be worried about what those future opportunities
10 are.

11 Waldorf has a successful commercial highway
12 corridor, it's number 20 on Money's best places to live.
13 We're told the Pike should emulate Clarendon, Clarendon is
14 number 44. With the Pike's current design you see a sign,
15 you see ample surface parking, you pull in and patronize that
16 business. In Bethesda, 355 is a canyon and you don't notice
17 the businesses as you drive past. The question before you is
18 is Rockville a city of neighborhoods of diverse residents and
19 business owners with a commercial spine that serves their
20 needs, or is it a concrete canyon that imposes itself on
21 those neighborhoods ultimately devouring them in favor of
22 wealthy department dwellers sipping lattes along the JM State
23 Highway, the choice is yours.

24 And I'd like to thank all of you for all the time
25 you've put in on this, you don't get paid money to do this,

1 and I thought you asked some very good questions. I don't
2 know if you agree that you didn't always get good answers
3 from the panels, but thank you. And I hope that more people
4 will come in to testify because it's very important. Thank
5 you.

6 CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Are there any
7 questions?

8 COMMISSIONER HILL: I do have a question for Mr.
9 Dyer. I just want to make sure that we are talking about a
10 pedestrian crossing over the railroad tracks between the Pike
11 and Twinbrook. Is that what you were speaking to?

12 MR. DYER: There were two issues about that
13 specifically mentioned. One is the type of bridge, I believe
14 the language in that section describes a pedestrian and/or
15 vehicular in the one I cited there. And secondly, the
16 concern for me is not only the question of what would be the
17 reason that this would be possible? Would it mean that
18 houses would be torn down? And there would be questions, I
19 think some of the comments that were brought up previously
20 prior to the whole process was about cars parking in
21 Twinbrook where parking is limited in a the developments on
22 the other side, and that perhaps if you have more ways to get
23 across the tracks you could have people dropping their car
24 off and then running across the bridge to the restaurants.
25 So, I thought that was not just the property owners' issue as

1 far as what would happen to homes there, but even if the
2 homes stayed, more crossings could mean more parking abuses
3 in the Twinbrook neighborhood.

4 COMMISSIONER HILL: Okay. Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN: Thank you. All right. Since we had no
6 one else who had signed up directly is there anyone else who
7 would like to speak this evening? No one?

8 MS. MULLICAN: I would.

9 CHAIRMAN: Please. We've worked so hard, we want
10 to hear your feedback. So, again --

11 MS. MULLICAN: I understand if --

12 CHAIRMAN: -- please speak directly into the mic.

13 MS. MULLICAN: -- I speak tonight I can't speak
14 again, or something, whatever.

15 CHAIRMAN: You can always provide written
16 responses.

17 MS. MULLICAN: Right. Well --

18 CHAIRMAN: So --

19 MS. MULLICAN: -- because no one else signed up I
20 came here to hear a lot of citizens talk about this plan, I
21 decided okay, I'll take the time.

22 First of all, I want to thank -- oh, I'm Brigitta
23 Mullican, and I live on Lewis Avenue, and I don't have a lot
24 of concerns like a lot of people do, it's a public street,
25 and yes, sometimes the Rockville Pike has a little gridlock,

1 we give them more traffic, that's just normal. Okay. If
2 you're going to have growth you're going to have traffic. I
3 remember Mayor Counsel making a big deal about parking, and
4 the meters on Lewis Avenue. There are meters on Lewis Avenue
5 that are not being used at this time, hopefully in the future
6 the City will get some revenue when there's more of a parking
7 issue, but there's no parking issue at the Twinbrook Metro
8 Station, at least on my side of Twinbrook.

9 I want to thank you all, because I've been
10 listening to you all on Wednesday nights when you all have
11 been talking about this for a long, long time, and I
12 appreciate John talking about Lewis Avenue, and the concern
13 about the shadowing and the height of the building and all
14 that stuff. But I'm not just interested because I'm a Lewis
15 Avenue person, I'm interested because I know how the plan
16 works, and I don't get real hung up like some people do, we
17 know we have traffic problems, and people don't like
18 development, but the City needs to have a plan because
19 developers are going to re-develop certain areas in the Pike,
20 so we need to have some sort of continuity of what they are
21 allowed and not allowed to do.

22 My concern is to how this two-mile, or less than
23 two-mile stretch is planned into being compatible to the rest
24 of the Pike with the County. The County does their thing, I
25 understand you all have been working with them, so my concern

1 is that we can't get stuck on just what we think we want to
2 do if it's not compatible with the County. We talk about
3 boulevard, there's some people that like it, some don't.

4 The other thing is I like the fact that you all
5 said you added in some bike lanes. If it's just going to be
6 two miles and it doesn't connect to the County bike lanes
7 then I would be very disappointed. But again, it's a plan,
8 you don't know what's going to happen. I want to thank you
9 for all your time, and I will listen to see what other people
10 say, and I just want to give you the compliments because
11 you're going to hit some people that are really nit-gritty,
12 worry about well, the plan changes, as we all know, but you
13 need to have a plan for the staff and for developer to have
14 some guidance. So, thank you for everything you've done.
15 You've really had some great questions. I love all of you
16 all when you deliberate with these issues that I think you're
17 representing the community very well. Most people don't come
18 out here to speak because they expect you to do it for them.
19 So, thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN: Thanks for watching.

21 COMMISSIONER HILL: I do have a question.

22 MS. MULLICAN: You're always on.

23 COMMISSIONER HILL: I do have a question.

24 CHAIRMAN: Brigitta?

25 COMMISSIONER HILL: As a Lewis Avenue resident in

1 particular I just was wondering about this access, the idea
2 of adding access between the Pike. We've looked at that as a
3 great advantage to the neighborhood because Twinbrook is very
4 much isolated from the Pike by the railroad tracks, but there
5 was a great interesting point made tonight that that could be
6 a hazard to the neighborhood, too.

7 MS. MULLICAN: I heard what he said, and I also
8 know that when the Twinbrook Sector Plan, and when we've had
9 the charades and all that, when people, neighbors have gotten
10 together there's always been talk about we should have
11 another access over the railroad, pedestrian and vehicle. I
12 don't think that's ever going to happen. If you understand
13 anything about funding, transportation, and WMATA, and the
14 State, and the County, I don't ever see it in my lifetime,
15 I'm not even sure in my granddaughter's lifetime. But it's a
16 wish. I mean, I think it would be great if we had another
17 way to come over, but I don't think it'll ever happen. And
18 any time I hear things about I'm going to tear down houses on
19 Lewis Avenue to do something I have a little bit more reason
20 to not believe. It's sometimes a conversation thing to get
21 people excited, you know, and, no, I don't have a concern.
22 But it would be, it's a nice wish list to be able to have
23 another access. Right now I think there's talk about closing
24 the Randolph Road because of the Montrose thing. I mean,
25 again, that's a County issue, but it seems like they want to

1 do everything for safety reason, they're not going to want to
2 create another problem, I guess, to have another
3 vehicle/pedestrian overpass.

4 What I'm disappointed at is that when they are re-
5 doing the Twinbrook WMATA, the, you know, development I was
6 sorry that maybe that couldn't have been made bigger and some
7 more, you know, maybe even a car go through it, or something.
8 I mean, that's where I'm disappointed. But I understand how
9 it works, you know, WMATA to get more money, I mean, it's a
10 big issue. But we all have wish lists like that. I don't
11 see it happening.

12 COMMISSIONER HILL: Okay. Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Is there anyone
14 else who wishes to speak? Please.

15 MS. MITCHELL: Oh, wow. I'm her neighbor. I live
16 on Lemay. I'm Shanna Mitchell, I'm a new homeowner, and I
17 live very close --

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Spell your name please?

19 MS. MITCHELL: Sure. S-H-A-N-N-A. I am really
20 glad that you brought up, that she brought up some points,
21 and the other speaker, the gentleman today, that was most
22 enlightening. I want to say that most people just cut
23 through Twinbrook Station to get to the Pike. I don't
24 really, I think it'd be nice to have another access point,
25 but I don't think it's really necessary or critical. Parking

1 is also not really a problem because it's permitted nine to
2 five, we could always just expand that, that's not really a
3 big deal in that, you know, make sure that people who are not
4 just commuting and dropping off their cars and doing shopping
5 or going to the Metro, you know, they don't abuse that. So,
6 I don't really think that, I think that's an easy fix, you
7 could just expand the permitting process, no problem.

8 I think what concerns me, I mean, first of all, I
9 want to know if people have actually been to Lewis Avenue?
10 Have they actually looked at how the Metro parking lot towers
11 over our houses there? I don't even live on Lewis Avenue and
12 I can see it, you know, just, just, you know, miles away. I
13 take nightly walks all around, and I really can't believe,
14 really, 13 stories? So, my first question is, you know, have
15 you guys ever been there? I'm just sort of in disbelief
16 that, you know, it sounds like oh, we have this gradient
17 plan, and it's really cool because it won't dwarf the houses,
18 but that's already happening with the Metro building. These
19 are very small 1950s mid-century buildings, I don't, I'm not
20 really sure if 13 stories is really, or 11 plus two is really
21 cutting it, you know.

22 And the other thing that I want to say in the
23 limited time that I have left, you know, there's, we kind of
24 have a joke, especially with the younger set, like, you know,
25 teens, twenties and thirties we joke a lot about white

1 people's problems, and I'm kind of amazed because my
2 neighbors on Lewis Avenue, I don't know about your section,
3 but I would say it's 80, 90 percent Hispanic. I'm not seeing
4 really a lot of representation from this area. I understand
5 we're talking about a very small part of this overall plan,
6 but we also have to acknowledge that this is the plan that is
7 mostly intensely developed, and are we doing a lot of, are
8 there enough representation from all these communities who
9 are going to be affected the most? Are there materials that
10 are out in Spanish, for example? You know, I'm normally not,
11 I'm Jewish, I'm not even a person who would normally take up
12 this torch, but I just came from my neighborhood and I saw 90
13 percent of one sort of people, and I come here and I'm seeing
14 90 percent or so visibly from what I can tell superficially
15 of another sort, you know, are we, my concern is are we
16 involving everyone who's going to be directly affected by
17 these 13-story buildings? And that's my time. Thank you.

18 CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

19 COMMISSIONER HILL: Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN: Any questions? Okay.

21 (Whereupon, the requested portions of the meeting
22 were concluded.)
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24
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DIGITALLY SIGNED CERTIFICATE

DEPOSITION SERVICES, INC., hereby certifies that the attached pages represent an accurate transcript of the electronic sound recording of the proceedings before the City of Rockville's Planning Board in the matter of:

ROCKVILLE PIKE PLAN

Meeting 05-11



By: _____

Date: March 29, 2013

Paula Underwood, Transcriber